



For Immediate Release:

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Mortality Rates On The Decline in LA County

New Public Health report shows decreases in many leading causes of death

LOS ANGELES – The death rate in Los Angeles County declined 19% over a decade, according to a new report, *Mortality in Los Angeles County 2010: Leading causes of death and premature death with trends for 2001-2010* released by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. The decline in Los Angeles County was significantly greater than the 13% national decline.

“We’re making great progress against several leading causes of death in the County,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “Notable over this 10 year period were a 37% drop in coronary heart disease death rates, and a 35% decline in the stroke death rate. Despite this decline, in 2010, coronary heart disease and stroke still claimed 12,635 and 3,278 lives respectively, to remain the first and second leading causes of death.”

Other important death rate declines were 50% for HIV; 31% for pneumonia/ influenza, 22% for lung cancer; 17% for emphysema and other forms of chronic lung disease; and 13% for diabetes. The overall death rate in Los Angeles County, 615 deaths per 100,000 population, was 17.7% lower than the United States rate of 747 deaths per 100,000.

In spite of the impressive declines, not all population groups have benefited equally. For most of the leading causes of death, the highest death rates are among black males, and the rates in some regions of the County were consistently higher than other regions.

Another way to consider the relative importance of different causes of death is to look at how many years of life are lost based on age of death. The measure, premature mortality, counts the years of life lost before age 75. Prominent causes of premature mortality which rank much higher than when only number of deaths are considered, include both intentional and unintentional injuries.

The leading causes of premature death in LA County in 2010 were:

1. Coronary heart disease
2. Homicide
3. Suicide
4. Motor vehicle crash
5. Liver disease

“Disparities still exist by gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic area, and we are seeking ways to reduce these disparities. We continue to work with our many partners to close the gaps,” Dr. Fielding said.



An Aging Population

One disease for which the mortality rate has been increasing very rapidly is Alzheimer's disease. From 2001-2010, the death rate from Alzheimer's disease more than doubled, and the number of deaths increased from 905 to 2,242. In 2001, Alzheimer's disease was the 11th-leading cause of death in the County. By 2010, it moved up to the fifth-leading cause of death overall and the third-leading cause of death for women. The increase in number of Alzheimer's disease deaths largely reflects the County's aging population, as well as increased awareness of the disease.

"As the baby boomer generation ages, the burden of Alzheimer's disease is expected to increase significantly," said Dr. Fielding. "More effective treatments are needed, as are programs that support both patients and caregivers."

For additional information about the 2010 mortality rates in Los Angeles County, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dca/dcareportspubs.htm> to view the entire report. Or use our online query tool, L.A. HealthDataNow! at <http://dqs.publichealth.lacounty.gov>.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: @LAPublicHealth.

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